

BICYCLE SAFETY PROGRAM



----- Bicycle
----- Skills
----- Course
----- Instruction
----- Manual



Jesse White • Secretary of State

Children often leave their immediate block or neighborhood for the first time on a bicycle. Because bicycles are light in weight and not equipped with safety equipment, young bicyclists are extremely vulnerable in traffic.

The Bicycle Skills Course offers children an opportunity to measure their riding ability before entering street traffic. Skills such as balance and handling are practiced in a safe, protected environment. This manual explains how to set up and effectively sponsor a Bicycle Skills Course for children.

I encourage sponsoring Bicycle Skills Courses on school playgrounds and other places where children are present. Information, materials and assistance are available from my office's Traffic Safety Unit, 17 N. State St., Ste. 1159, Chicago, IL 60602, 312-814-2905 or 866-247-0213.

Jesse White

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Secretary of State



Bicycle Skills Course

A Bicycle Skills Course consists of a series of tests in which a child demonstrates his or her bicycle riding skills. The course can be set up as a competitive event using score cards or as a non-competitive demonstration of skills. The course is designed to be operated by the sponsoring group.

Sponsoring Groups and Volunteers

Suggested sponsoring groups are police or fire departments, park districts, bicycle shops, schools, churches, scouts and day camps. A successful course requires at least 10 volunteers. One volunteer judge is needed at each skills test. Judges should familiarize themselves with test assignments. They must know the scoring process and be able to explain the necessary bike maneuvers and the traffic application of the test. Volunteers are needed to register, organize and direct the participants and tally their scores.

Organizing the Bicycle Skills Course

The success of the program depends upon organization and volunteer workers. Sponsoring groups should arrange the following in advance of the program date:

- date/time
- participating groups
- suitable location (accessible and isolated from traffic, preferably a smooth parking lot surface)
- 10 volunteers; more for groups larger than 100
- prizes
- advertising/promotion
- registration/scorecards
- prizes if desired
- Bicycle Rules of the Road booklets (available from the Secretary of State's office)

Materials

The sponsoring group should provide materials to lay out the course. Police, public works departments or local stores may provide the following:

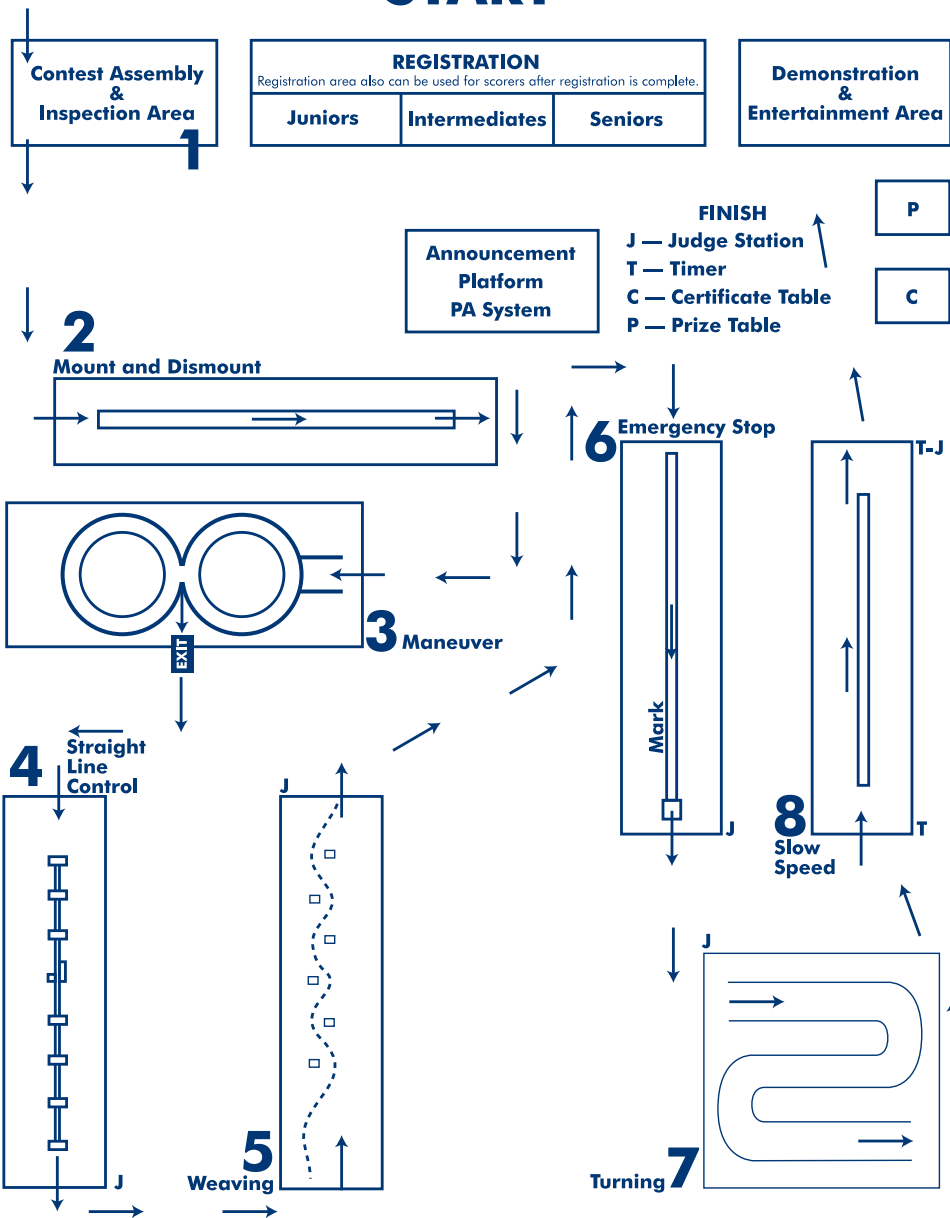
- ☐ 60-foot tape measure
- ☐ marking or traffic chalk (thick yellow)
- ☐ walking chalker (as used on baseball fields)
- ☐ six small traffic cones (12 or 18 inch)
- ☐ 12 small traffic cones or wood blocks (4 inch)
- ☐ 6-foot and 7.5-foot lengths of string
- ☐ stopwatch
- ☐ table and chairs for registration
- ☐ 10 pens/pencils and clipboards

Running the Course

- ✓ Instruct participants to line up at the registration table and give them a registration/scorecard to fill out. Children should carry these cards to each test.
- ✓ Divide participants into groups according to grade levels.
- ✓ Direct the children to the first station and subsequent stations by a volunteer. The judge enters the score as each test is completed.
- ✓ After completing all skills stations, ask the children to hand in scorecards at the registration table. Distribute bicycle safety literature to each participant.
- ✓ Tally the scores.
- ✓ Award ribbons/prizes (if applicable) to the top participants in each group.



START



Test #1 — Bicycle Inspection

Contact a local bicycle shop to inspect bikes. Bikes should be examined for safety equipment, size and condition. Helmets also should be inspected to ensure they are properly fitted and fastened.

Test #2 — Mounting and Dismounting

Purpose — To demonstrate starting and stopping while maintaining control and balance.

Scoring — Rider must mount the bicycle, steer the bicycle without losing balance or swerving out of the lines, and then dismount: **10 points maximum; deduct two points for each incorrect maneuver.**

The lane is 60 feet long and 3 feet wide. In limited space, the lane can be reduced to 40 feet.



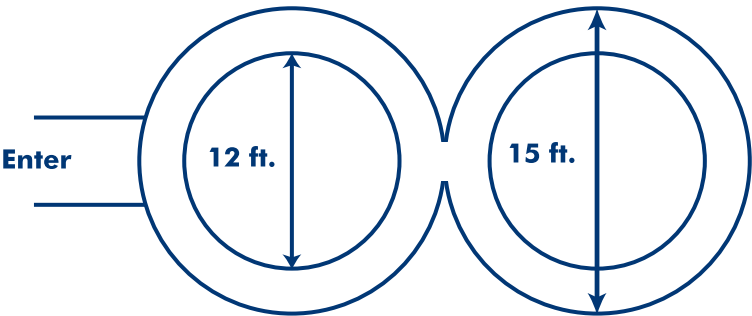
Test #3 — Circling and Changing Direction

Purpose — To test balance and steering control while changing directions.

Scoring — Rider should start to the right and maneuver through the circles in a figure 8: **10 points maximum; deduct two points for each time the rider moves off the marked lane or puts a foot down.**

Inner circle is 12 feet across; outer circle is 15 feet across, providing a 1.5-foot inner lane. To draw the circles, one person holds the 6-foot length of string in one spot, and the drawer pivots around this center point until a complete circle is made with the chalk. Using the same center point, replace the string with the 7.5-foot string and follow the same procedure, except do not complete the circle.

To draw the other half of the test, hold the end of the 7.5-foot string on the edge of the outer circle. After extending it completely, mark an X at the end of the string as the center point for the second set of circles. Follow the instructions for drawing the first set again.

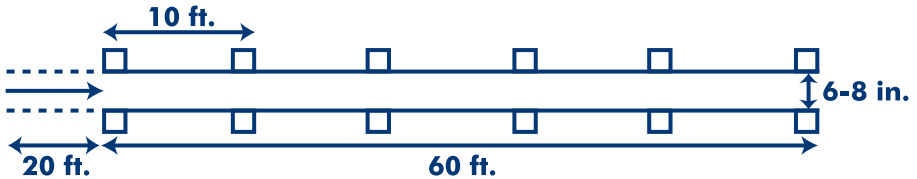


Test #4 — Straight Line Control

Purpose — To test balance and steering coordination.

Scoring — 10 points if the rider steers between all markers without veering, touching them with the tires, or stopping; deduct two points for each faulty move.

The lane is 60 feet long and 6-8 inches wide. There must 20 feet leading up to the start of the lane for the rider to gain balance, but this does not need to be marked. The length of the lane and balance lane can be reduced if space is limited. Small cones (4 inch) or wood blocks should be placed on the exterior of the lane at 10-foot intervals.



Test #5 — Weaving and Maneuvering

Purpose — To test balance, steering control and the rider's ability to judge distance.

Scoring — The rider must not hit any obstacles and must weave alternately right and left: 10 points maximum; deduct one point each time the rider makes a wrong turn, touches an obstacle or puts a foot down for balance.

There is no marked lane for this test, but the placement of the cones should be marked in case they are disturbed. Cones should be placed 8 feet apart, and riders should be given 20 feet of running room before the first cone.



Test #6 — Stopping Ability

Purpose — To test judgment and braking control.

Scoring — Rider should ride through the first 50 feet of the lane and be able to come to a complete stop within the last 10 feet: 10 points maximum; deduct two points if the rider touches the ground with either foot before bringing the bike to a complete stop using the brakes.

The lane is 60 feet long and 3 feet wide. A cross mark should be made at 50 feet. If space is limited, this test can be done on the same lane as Test #2.

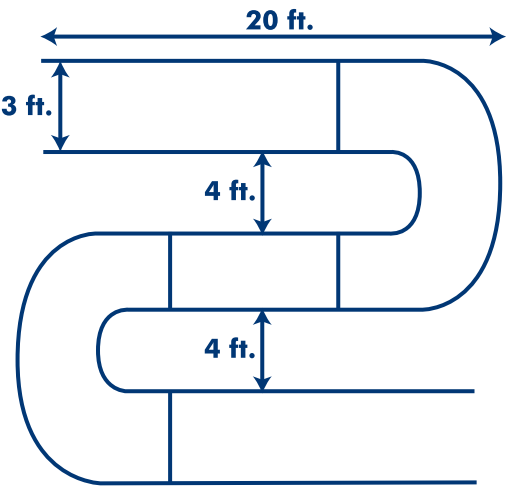


Test #7 — Short Radius Turning

Purpose — To test balance, speed control and steering coordination.

Scoring — Rider should maneuver through the course without veering over the lines or putting a foot down for balance: **10 points maximum; deduct one point each time the rider touches the ground or rides over the line.**

The lane is 3 feet wide, with each straight section 20 feet long. Draw all straight sections first and then connect them with an arc. Each lane is separated by 4 feet.

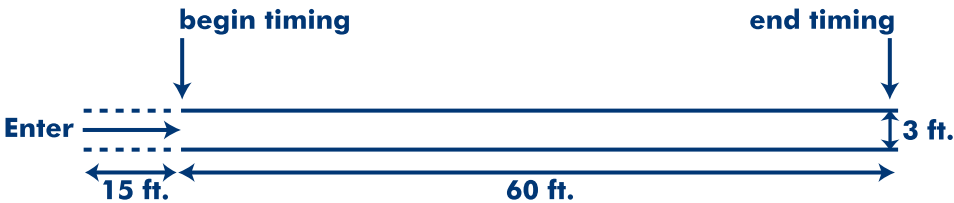


Test #8 — Slow Speed Control

Purpose — To test balance and speed control.

Scoring — Rider should maneuver the bike at a slow speed, requiring at least 30 seconds to move from start to finish. **Record the stopwatch time on the score sheet.**

The lane is 60 feet long and 3 feet wide. A 15-foot running lane should be provided but need not be marked. If space is limited, this test can be done on the course for Test #2.



Sample 30-Second Public Service Announcement

"Young bicycle riders are invited to participate in a Bicycle Skills Course in/at (town or school) this (day and date) beginning at (time). The event is sponsored by (name of organization) in cooperation with Secretary of State Jesse White. The Bicycle Skills Course provides an opportunity for children to test their bicycle skills and creates a greater awareness of bicycle laws and the importance of defensive cycling."

Sample Photo Assignment

What

(Sponsoring organization) will hold a Bicycle Skills Course for area young people.

When

(Day, Date, Time)

Where

(Facility, Town, Address)

Photo Possibility

Local youngsters maneuvering through a series of skills tests.

Contact

(Name) will be present at the skills course and can be reached at (phone number).

Sample Press Release

On (date and date), (sponsoring group) will hold a Bicycle Skills Course for youngsters ages 6 to 14 of (school or town) at (location and address) between the hours of (times). Participants who show exceptional bicycle-riding skills will receive awards and/or prizes. The event will provide an opportunity for bicyclists to measure their capabilities and increase their awareness of bicycle laws and the importance of defensive cycling.

(Name and title of spokesperson for sponsoring organization) said, "In order to make this Bicycle Skills Course an event the participants will enjoy and remember, many people and organizations have contributed their time and resources. We join Secretary of State Jesse White in providing early education as an effective method of improving traffic safety."

For more information, contact:

Secretary of State Jesse White

Driver Services Department, Traffic Safety Unit

17 N. State St., Ste. 1159

Chicago, IL 60602

312-814-2905

866-247-0213

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois.
August 2007 – 4M – DSD A 97.5

